

WHAT OUR *readers think...*

We're grateful for our generous donors and readers and love to receive your feedback. Thanks to Paula and Jessica for sharing their experiences with *Exponent II*, below.

"I am about halfway through reading the [LGBTQ] Spring 2012 issue... How I wish I could have found this in 1990 when my husband came out after 11 years of marriage and three children. At the time, I searched in vain for information, advice, commiserations, anything that could help me get through the "what now?" phase... What a brilliant issue.

With thanks to you and your brave contributors."

- Paula M.

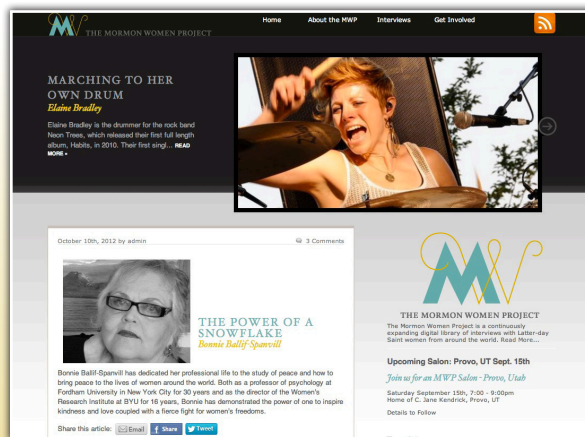
" Beautiful [Summer] issue! I promptly went out and bought 3 or 4 of Sister Chieko Okazaki's books, and got a frickin' kick out of the Mormon Hey Girl memes!! Thank you, Sisters, for all your hard work, and for helping this inactive, snarky and skeptical chick feel the Spirit at least a couple times a year! " ♥

- Jessica Laitres Deschaines

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editor@exponentii.org

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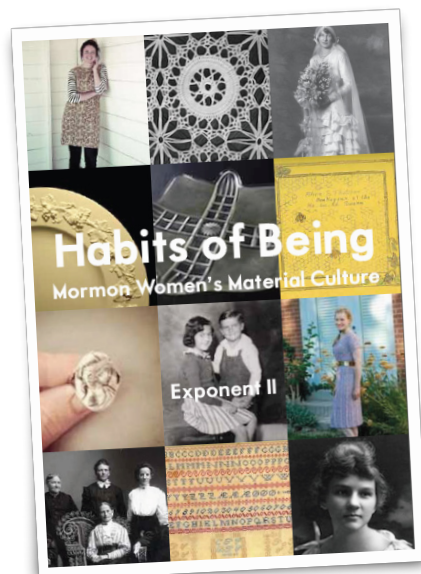


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EXPONENT II

*Am I Not a
Woman and
a Sister?*

FAMILY POLITICS
AND THE POLITICS
OF FAMILY

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

WHAT MORMON
FEMINISTS WANT
TO SAY DURING
THE 2012
ELECTIONS

Joanna Brooks





WHAT'S INSIDE.....?

featured stories

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WHAT IS EXPONENT II:

The purpose of Exponent II is to provide a forum for Mormon women to share their life experiences in an atmosphere of trust and acceptance. This exchange allows us to better understand each other and shape the direction of our lives. Our common bond is our connection to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and our commitment to women. We publish this paper as a living history in celebration of the strength and diversity of women.

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We will certainly form a more perfect union as we choose leaders whose priority is the welfare of the people, who will work towards a goal of having "no poor among us."

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People forget politicians are people. They forget that they have lives, have families, and are just women and men who are trying to come up with solutions to the country's problems.

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We are always looking for artwork and photography to accompany our writing. Please send jpegs or gifs of art submissions to our email. If you are interested in illustrating articles, please contact us for specific assignments.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

“Hey, Red Aimee! Have a great summer. Stay cute and cool.” This sentiment, or something closely resembling it, fills the pages of my eighth-grade yearbook. At the time, I tried to think of it as a term of endearment, hoping that it meant I was at least interesting enough to have been given a nickname. But the truth was, as an inactive Mormon girl growing up in Provo, Utah, in the 1980s, the last thing I needed was to also be considered a Communist!

Growing up, I had always been vocal about various social causes. At age eight, I joined Greenpeace and circulated a petition through my elementary school to “help save the whales.” In the sixth grade, I chose to research the Soviet Union for our school’s World’s Fair. As a child of the Cold War who’d spent sleepless nights wondering when the “star wars” would begin, I wanted to learn about the children of the U.S.S.R. and whether or not they shared my fears. At age 12, I was too young to be interested in Communism—I was interested in world peace—but my teacher was uncomfortable with me researching this “godless nation.” In this politically conservative environment, my burgeoning progressive viewpoints were often seen as radical at worst and marginal at best to many of my peers and teachers. Staged debates in middle and high school on topics including women serving in the military, capital punishment, climate change, and the welfare system often left me standing on my own. The fact that my progressive positions could be labeled “Communist” by my peers speaks to how unacceptable and threatening even a baby Democrat could be to some in this bastion of conservatism.

All of these dynamics were complicated by my outsider status as it related to the Church. While I had developed my political point of view in Provo, I had done so apart from the LDS Church itself. Because all of my peers and teachers, as far as I knew, were active Mormons who also appeared right-leaning in their politics, I became convinced that the Church’s teachings must appeal exclusively to conservative Republicans. I resolved that I could never participate in such a religion.

And yet, for the past 18 years, I have been a practicing member of the Mormon Church. While in college at the University of Utah, I began to engage with LDS history and theology and in that study discovered that the political values I had seen in Provo were only one possible expression of this religion’s rich and complex teachings. Where one LDS practitioner can read Mormon scripture as a call to personal agency and responsibility, another can read it as a call to social justice where individual salvation is dependent on the collective spiritual and temporal equality of society. I have found a spiritual home and community in Mormonism that has not forced me to compromise my political point of view. I wish I had heard more of that political diversity while growing up in Provo. As it turns out, many of those good Mormon peers and teachers that my eighth-grade mind had assumed were unflinching conservatives don’t happen to be as conservative or intransigent as I’d once supposed. As a religious community, I wish we would do more to celebrate the diversity our rich theology and history can produce in its members, rather than finding strength in empty displays of conformity.

In this historic political moment, *Exponent II* is focused on putting to rest the notion that Latter-day Saints are one monolithic, Christian Conservative voting bloc. A recent Pew Research poll shows that around 17% of American Mormons consider themselves Democrats. As a feminist magazine, we know that our writers and readership tend to lean more progressive, yet the rich diversity of political thought within Mormonism can also be seen on the following pages. From a call to bipartisanship from former Republican Utah House Representative Sheryl Allen, to Marina Capella’s sacrament meeting talk on progressive environmental stewardship, to Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s historical perspective on Mormon politics, we can experience a small and diverse sampling of Latter-day Saint women’s political perspectives.

Though it’s sometimes tempting to create an identity for ourselves and others around a label, we know that real people are more complex, interesting and wonderful than a single word can encompass. For evidence of this fact, we invite you to keep reading . . .

Aimee Evans-Hickman

The Wasp

SAN FRANCISCO, DEC. 16TH 1881,

ENTERED AT THE POST OFFICE AT SAN FRANCISCO, CAL. AND ADMITTED FOR TRANSMISSION THROUGH THE MAILS AT SECOND CLASS RATES



THE THREE TROUBLESOME CHILDREN.

"Three Troublesome Children," a cover illustration from The Wasp magazine, 1881; courtesy the Bancroft Library, U.C. Berkeley.

Family Politics AND THE POLITICS OF FAMILY

Today, most members of the Church find it almost impossible to imagine a time when Latter-day Saint families were stigmatized as both non-Christian and anti-American. But the politics of family has not gone away. | By Laurel Thatcher Ulrich • Cambridge, Massachusetts

a few years ago, I attended a conference in Boise, Idaho. During a break in the meetings, I decided to visit the State Historical Society to do a little family history. Although I hadn't lived in Idaho for more than 50 years, I was born there and had deep roots in the state. I knew exactly what I would say when I got to the information desk.

"I am looking for information on two of my great-grandfathers. One served in the territorial legislature and the other in the territorial prison. Can you help me?"

The man at the desk laughed, and pointed me toward the relevant records. I quickly found evidence confirming the family legends. John B. Thatcher served a term in the Idaho legislature in 1882 and Jeppe Folkman in the state penitentiary in 1886. His crime—"unlawful cohabitation," or polygamy.

"Over the years, Mormons have been both citizens and outcasts, participants and pariahs in the body politic."

The stories of my two ancestors suggest the larger history of Latter-day Saints in politics. Over the years, Mormons have been both citizens and outcasts, participants and pariahs in the body politic. From the 1830s onward, people disdained Mormons because of their habit of hiving together, their clannishness, their propensity to vote as a bloc, their belief in revelation, and their supposed intention to take over the country and turn it into a prophetic dominion. Only later was polygamy added to the list of charges, but when that happened opponents of the Church acquired a powerful weapon.

With other Latter-day Saints, my great-grandparents migrated into southeastern Idaho from Utah in the 1870s. For a time, Idahoans tolerated the Mormon presence, but after the passage of the Edmunds Anti-Polygamy Act of 1882, federal marshals began arresting polygamists and the Idaho legislature passed a law disenfranchising Mormons. That is why Great-Grandfather Thatcher served only one term in the Territorial Legislature and why my Great-Grandfather Folkman was fined and sent to prison. Great-Grandfather Thatcher might have gone to prison too, but his first wife died in 1882, leaving him with only one spouse. The Idaho Test Act of 1884 went beyond the federal law in making it illegal for anyone to vote, stand for office, or serve on a jury who belonged to an organization "which practices bigamy or polygamy or plural or celestial marriage, as a doctrinal rite." In essence, it stigmatized belief as well as action and made affiliation itself a crime.

19th century Americans, like Americans today, knew how to practice the politics of family. Critics of the church portrayed the church as a den of immorality and licentiousness and a danger not only to conventional morality but to the democratic process itself. In the Congressional debate over passage of the Edmunds Act, Representative Charles Williams of Wisconsin charged that such a practice "not only disrupts and destroys the family, but it makes the family impossible. It banishes the sacred word 'home'. . . It blots out the sweetest phrases in this world, 'parent and child,' 'father and mother,' in any sense worth repeating. It does more: it loosens the foundations of civil government; it takes away the corner-stone of republican institutions."

It has been more than a century since the Church abandoned plural marriage. Given the Church's explosive growth, fewer and fewer members have any reason to remember our polygamous past. Today, most members of the Church find it almost impossible to imagine a time when Latter-day Saint families were stigmatized as both non-Christian and anti-American. But the politics of family has not gone away. For that reason alone, Latter-day Saints might want to consider the anti-polygamy crusade of the late 19th century.

For my part, I cannot forget it. My great-grandparents died long before I was born, but my father's father, Nathan Davis Thatcher, was a great story teller, and he made sure that his grandchildren knew the family history. As a child I loved to hear him tell how he outran the U.S. Marshal when he was arrested for attempting to vote in Idaho in 1888, the year he turned 21. Grandpa wasn't a polygamist. He wasn't even married. But the Idaho Test Oath made him an outlaw. As I remember the story, the United States Marshal found him working in a field on his father's farm, presented him with a summons, and told him to show up at the courthouse in Blackfoot the next day. When Grandpa got to Blackfoot, he found the court house, the jail, and even the box cars along the railroad siding so full of Mormons that he knew it would be hours, maybe days, before his case could be heard. He also knew that if the judge ruled against him, he too might end up in jail and would have no chance to vote. So he decided to defy the law and hop a train for home. As he took a seat, he looked up to see the U.S. Marshal entering the same car. He quickly slipped into the next car. The Marshal followed, but Grandpa stayed one step ahead of his pursuer until he got to the end of the train. Then he jumped off into the night and walked the rest of the way home. He went to the polls and cast his vote the next day.

“Grandpa’s lesson in civil disobedience didn’t teach me to disdain government. It taught me to cherish my right to vote. I think it also prepared me to identify with others denied the rights of citizenship as I grew older.”

Grandpa's lesson in civil disobedience didn't teach me to disdain government. It taught me to cherish my right to vote. I think it also prepared me to identify with others denied the

rights of citizenship as I grew older. I was in high school when the Supreme Court ruled school segregation illegal and in college when the Church's denial of full membership to African-Americans became an issue. Later, I discovered the history of Mormon feminism and learned that the same federal legislation that sent Jeppe Folkman to jail banned women suffrage in the Territory of Utah. As I researched and taught American history, the story broadened.

I sometimes tell my students that the history of the United States is a terrible/wonderful story, an account of a sustained struggle by ordinary people to help the United States fulfill ideals often violated in practice. The United States wasn't created by a small group of "Founding Fathers," however important their work might have been, but by generations of Americans who cared enough about their country to vote, stand for office, protest, demonstrate, and sometimes go to jail.

Some of my Idaho relatives weren't happy when I defended Martin Luther King in the not-infrequent debates that took place around the family dinner table in the 1960s. They thought he was a Communist. But they had forgotten their own history. An especially poignant part of that history was the association between Latter-day Saints and suspect racial and ethnic groups. Benjamin B. Ferris, a federal official who spent six months in Utah in the 1850s, argued that although God had allowed the ancient Jews to practice polygamy due to the "hardness of their hearts," such a system now belonged only "to the indolent and opium-eating Turks and Asiatics, the miserable Africans, the North American savages, and the Latter-day Saints." The only solution to polygamy, he argued, was the "ultimate disorganization of the Mormon community."

In 19th century novels, newspapers, political speeches, and even in academic journals, Mormons were linked with Muslims, Jews, African slaves, American Indians, and with heterodox ideas like socialism, mesmerism, mysticism, and even feminism. Writers simply couldn't make up their minds about Mormon women. In 1857, one writer lampooned polygamous wives for dressing in a kind of bloomer costume and for being "strong-minded." More commonly writers portrayed them as victims of patriarchy, an assumption that allowed the abrogation of female suffrage. Ironically, Mormons didn't differ a great deal from other Americans in their racial assumptions. In his 1852

defense of polygamy, Parley P. Pratt assumed that in distributing pre-existent spirits God favored the mostly Caucasian converts to Mormonism over “the Hottentots, the African negroes, the idolatrous Hindoos, or any other of the fallen nations that dwell upon the face of this earth.”

On both sides, such arguments were promoted as defenses of “the family.” Mormons wanted to preserve what they considered to be the true blood of Israel. Their opponents wanted to keep Mormons and other minorities from tainting the American polity. The same congressional session that passed the Edmunds Anti-Polygamy Act passed a Chinese Exclusion Act that banned further immigration of Chinese laborers and the naturalization of those already here, and that, through court interpretation, prevented the wives of already resident Chinese laborers from joining their husbands. To do so, one judge explained, might allow the Chinese to bring their minor children into the country. The goal was to reduce the Asian population, not expand it.

A cartoon published in a San Francisco newspaper in 1881 shows how the so-called “Mormon question” intersected with concerns about other minorities. It portrays the United States as a household inhabited by a negligent “Uncle Sam” and his harried wife “Columbia.” Distracted by politics, Sam is unable to assert his authority over his family, leaving his obviously overwhelmed spouse to cope alone with “Three Troublesome Children”—a Chinaman, an American Indian, and a Mormon. Although the cartoon is crudely racist, it wouldn’t take much to shift the labels to convey some of the more extreme forms of present-day political rhetoric. While Congress dithers, some argue, Americans are left to cope alone with threats from illegal aliens, Muslim terrorists, and gay activists.

I do not mean to suggest a one-to-one correlation between 19th century issues and those that animate political debate today.

Nor am I condemning those who oppose gay marriage, worry about terrorism, or favor stricter immigration laws. I do mean to question simplistic notions about the nature of the “American family.” In the heat of contemporary politics, I think it might be worth remembering that Latter-day Saints, too, were once considered a danger to the body politic.

It says something about the strength of our democracy that in this year’s presidential election, an African-American will face

a Mormon. The two men have a lot in common. Both are graduates of Harvard Law School. Both have lovely wives and impressive children. Both have reputations for honesty and hard work. Both want to make the country stronger, encourage economic growth, protect the environment, and preserve liberty. It doesn’t make sense to demonize either one of them in the name of religion. I have no more use for partisan commentators who use Romney’s Mormonism as a charge against him than for those who use Obama’s Muslim heritage or his membership in a militant black church as a reason to mistrust him. Neither man is a racist. Both men represent the ascendancy of once-stigmatized minorities in American political life. As Americans we should

be proud of the fact that an African-American and a Mormon can become standard bearers for political parties that once disdained them. And for the record, both men are descended from polygamists. ❖

“AS AMERICANS
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AND FOR THE RECORD,
both men are descended from
polygamists.”



Second LDS Church leader Brigham Young had 55 wives



Anne Gregerson • "In the Same Boat" • Provo, Utah | Photographer, David Hawkinson, www.HawkinsonPhotography.com

What happened to political **COMPROMISE AND COOPERATION?**

Sheryl Allen served for 16 years in the Utah House of Representatives. She also served as President of the Women's Legislative Network of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Americans for the Arts honored her in 2006 with the National Award for State Arts Leadership. Her following appeal for bipartisan cooperation is especially relevant in the current political climate.

By Sheryl L. Allen | Bountiful, Utah



Why would a lifelong Republican and 16-year veteran state legislator run with a Democrat for Lt. Governor in America's reddest state, Utah? I am that Republican, and I don't ask myself why. I know why.

The seed was planted when I was a student at the University of Utah. A sorority sister, Jodi King, invited her father to come speak one Sunday night at the sorority house. Everyone came. How often do college girls get to listen to a U.S. Congressman? Democrat David King from Utah packed the room and spoke eloquently about the need for balanced government. "The United States

needs the compromise demanded by a balanced government between not only the executive and legislative branches of government but between political parties. It's what the Founding Fathers intended."

Compromise! Balanced government! Forty-five years later that still resonates, and I ache for it. Republican commentator and speechwriter Peggy Noonan agrees. In *Patriotic Grace* she writes, "We're going to get through the difficult times as Democrats and Republicans together, as Americans together. We knew this in our bones after 9/11. But time passed, things happened, and we forgot . . . Our pointless enmity must end."

I entered the Utah House of Representatives in 1994 when Republicans dominated, but the split between parties was

64 percent Republican and 36 percent Democrat. Democrats had enough votes to block controversial amendments to the state constitution, an act that requires a two-thirds majority. Democrats could join with moderate Republicans, of which I was one, to demand compromise or force amendments to bills. As a freshman legislator, balanced government seemed to be working even with majority Republican governance. Utah had a strong Republican governor who was moderate in his approach to public policy, and he worked with members of both political parties. He understood that his office was co-equal to the legislature. I didn't have to give much thought to Rep. King's remarks of so long ago, and enmity did not reign.

But things began to change. Through a combination of redistricting, the sheer power of political money, and political savvy, Republicans won an even larger majority in the Utah legislature. The moderate wing of Republican members became ineffective as the Patrick Henry Caucus, an offshoot of the Tea Party, expanded, wielded considerable power, and demanded loyalty from other Republicans. If a legislator didn't "go along," she often found herself not "getting along." Her bills were frequently defeated, held (a legislative maneuver to bury a bill), or they were lost in sifting during the last days of the legislative session. I know a lot about that. It was not unusual for me to be the recipient of these not-so-subtle techniques. Compromise not only suffered; it was practically extinct.

The demise of cooperation between political parties or political philosophies within the same party is often gradual. However, in Utah, a big shift came in 2007, the year of school vouchers. Vouchers allow parents of students who attend private schools to use public money issued via a voucher to pay all or part of student tuition. It's a big part of the national movement to privatize public services such as prisons, school lunch, and even some social services.

The battle to pass school vouchers in Utah started in the 1980s. Conservative Republicans supported the idea while moderate Republicans and Democrats typically did not. Candidate positions on school vouchers became a topic in every Utah legislative election, and it often became the defining issue in Republican primary elections. If a candidate supported school vouchers, they could depend on significant political donations and campaign assistance from pro-voucher supporters. If a candidate opposed vouchers, they could depend on modest

campaign donations and campaign assistance from educators. Most legislative districts in Utah are not competitive between political parties, but legislative seats are competitive in intra-party campaigns.

A legislator's position on school vouchers influenced everything from her election to membership in caucuses within both the Utah House and Senate, but particularly in the House. By 2007, legislative leadership was determined to pass a school voucher bill. There was backroom arm-twisting and offers of political rewards for a vote switch to support school vouchers. After weeks of tense debate and by a 38 to 37 House vote, the Utah Legislature passed the nation's first state-wide school voucher bill to allow the use of state money for students to attend private schools—even religious schools. For years I had worked to rally the Republican moderates to oppose school vouchers, but it was legislative leadership that had the muscle.

Immediately after legislative adjournment, opponents of the bill organized to conduct a rare referendum, a public effort to recall the bill. The referendum required getting the signatures of 10 percent of the electorate in 15 of Utah's 29 counties within 45 days, a Herculean task. The effort was led by dedicated individuals primarily affiliated with the Utah Education Association and the Utah Parent Teacher Association.

Along with thousands of volunteers, I assisted this work, and the petition drive miraculously succeeded. In the November election, after a campaign that totaled \$8 million in expenditures from both sides, school vouchers were defeated by a 62 percent majority, a mandate in political terms.

However, the political war was not over. To marginalize the influence of public employees, the legislature has since banned payroll deductions to public employee political action committees, and there have been legislative attempts, some successful, to minimize the membership and influence of the PTA.

Magnified by the recession, there has been a significant decline in the effort for public education funding. I believe that had there been more balance between political parties, the voucher fight would have been avoided, and education funding would likely be healthier.

Political rhetoric in Utah is not as harsh and divisive as we hear coming from Washington. Utah Democrats are such a small minority that their oratory is necessarily and frequently tempered in order to be admitted into political discussions. But more balance is needed to ensure that public policy more accurately represents the general public interest. At present, public policy often represents only political conservatives.

Edmund Burke, the Irish statesman and author who bravely supported the cause of the American Revolution while serving in the British House of Commons, wrote, "All government—indeed, every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act—is founded on compromise and barter." Yet what we are hearing in both Washington and the halls of our state capitols is overheated rhetoric for the purpose of electoral dominance rather than prudent acts for the benefit of the general public.

When retiring U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe from Maine was asked why she was not seeking reelection, she responded, "Unfortunately, I do not realistically expect the partisanship of recent years in the Senate to change over the short term." Extreme partisanship soured her willingness to serve. What a tragedy to lose an experienced Senator who was willing to work across the aisle in an effort to solve the challenges in America. Will her replacement be another partisan purist and serve a political party or serve our country? Whom will your elected representative serve?

In the 2010 Utah election I ran for Lt. Governor on the Democratic ticket with Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon. I did not change my party affiliation. I am still a registered Republican. One does not run for any office without a spark of optimism, but I well understood the Republican dominance in my beloved state. However, I recognized the need for balance and for working together for the common good. In my opinion, the incumbent Governor initially bowed too frequently to the demands of the Legislature rather than standing as a co-equal branch of government. Bills were often passed without due consideration to the minority party or even the obvious

sentiments of the public. Balance and compromise were needed, and I wanted to be part of that message.

Peter Corroon was not only a proven, capable administrator, he was a practicing Catholic. LDS Church members dominate in Utah. When the Church has a political interest, the Church influences legislation by working directly (and quietly) with legislators to sponsor, amend, or defeat bills. For example, Church lobbyists are known to have been repeatedly involved in liquor control legislation. Liquor is sold only in liquor stores owned by the State, and liquor licenses for restaurants and bars are strictly limited, perhaps to the detriment of tourism.

A wise, pragmatic Catholic governor would have been a refreshing change to the LDS dominance in Utah and a balance to my active LDS faith. Think Mitt Romney. He selected an active Catholic, Paul Ryan, as his vice-presidential running-mate. LDS members recognize the importance of religious balance on the national level. Shouldn't that balance exist on a state level in Utah?

The Democratic ticket of Corroon/Allen was soundly defeated during the Republican conservative surge that swept the country in 2010. Utah became even more conservative. We accomplished little in altered public policy, but we pointed the way toward improved, balanced government.

It's time for a rebirth of political cooperation and negotiation. I hope the message of a Democrat and a Republican campaigning together will resonate in the future. I hope we elect more Olympia Snowes who will reach across the aisle and then persevere in that endeavor. Partisan enmity must end if we are going to effectively resolve this country's challenges. ❀

"... what we are hearing in both Washington and the halls of our state capitols is overheated rhetoric for the purpose of electoral dominance rather than prudent acts for the benefit of the general public."



Women's liberation march from Farrugut Square to Lafayette Park

When Politics are Personal

Mormon women have been active in politics since the beginning of the Church. In the first piece from *The Woman's Exponent*, Laura Miner emphasizes the importance of women taking their recently won voting rights seriously. Judy Dushku reflects on the impact of Sonia Johnson's excommunication of Mormon women in the wake of the fight for the ERA in the winter 1980 issue of *Exponent II*. Meghan Raynes' final piece from *The Exponent* blog describes the potential impact of current proposed legislation on women's health and reproductive freedom.

STRONG-MINDED WOMEN

Laura M. Miner | Salt Lake City, Utah | March 8th, 1874

The election has come and gone, and how often has been heard from women the remark, "Oh! No thank you, I did not vote, I am not strong-minded." Poor, silly things! Did you not know that by such a speech you called forth pity for yourselves and the male members of your families, from every thoughtful person? Acknowledge, if you will, that you are indifferent to the interests of the community in which you dwell, or, that you are too ignorant to understand the social and political questions involved, but do not say it is because you lack moral strength to express those opinions in public.

There is no misery entailed on the other sex by marriage so great as that of being united to a weak-minded woman. Fancy what a safeguard the counsels of a woman would be to a man in the temptations that beset him in his youth, what a comforter in the hour of adversity, how unflinchingly she could bear poverty by his side and help him to meet, with indifference, the scorn that the world heaps upon failure. Better! Ten thousand times better be strong minded, the true companion of your husband and brothers, the guide and promoter of your children's welfare, than the puny, inane creature who has not the strength to think.

I do not advocate the claims, of a masculine woman, to admiration. On the contrary, I think she should be sweet, and womanly, and not flaunt her opinions in every one's face

because she knows enough to form them; no more than a man, though he be an athlete, should attempt the role of a bully and prize fighter, yet who sometimes might realize that strength was a Godsend to him for the defense of those he revered or loved. So should we consider and guard the elective franchise, using it conscientiously, as a God-given privilege, and when men are placed in nomination, of rulers or delegates who would rob us for our rights, our united ballot should be against them.

But, methinks, I hear the gentlemen say, "We will restore the right of dower." Sirs, are you so ignorant of the doings of the Utah Legislature that you do not know that at the same session during which they took away the right of dower, they gave us the right to hold property exclusive of our husbands' control? So that an industrious woman, with a trade or business, though tied to a thriftless man, need not be despoiled of her earnings to supply the needs of his lazy existence. And the heiress, who would fain be loved for herself alone, need not fear the advances of the fortune hunter, for her possessions are still hers after marriage, if she chooses to retain them; it is only through her affections that she can be reduced to beggary.

But here is where Legislatures, Congress and Presidents have failed to repeal the flat given to women by the great Law Giver, in the day of her creation, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee"; and every loving wife feels the force of it as strongly now as she could the day it was promulgated and she would not have it otherwise. But for any upstart demagogue

or unprincipled libertine to claim the right to legislate for, and govern a woman's heart and conscience, simply because he is a man, is what no strong-minded woman will concede.

Should such men succeed, however, in disfranchising us, we will continue to study the art of self-government and the principles of religion and so instruct our children that it shall not be said of Utah:

"Her pride was crushed,
Her sons were willing slaves, nor blushed
In their own land, no more their own,
To crouch beneath a stranger's throne.

Where slaves, converted by the sword,
Their mean apostate worship pour'd,
And cursed the faith their sires adored."

ASSESSING THE SITUATION

Judy Dushku | Watertown, Massachusetts | Winter 1980 | Vol. 6.2

The excommunication of Sonia Johnson is a complicated event and will continue to affect the lives of many. Much has been said about how Sonia and the Mormons for ERA have negatively affected potential converts to the Church by exposing the Church's political activities. It is a sad irony, however, that many more might be discouraged by the now widespread image of the Church as anti-feminist, or as unsympathetic to women. Many of my women friends who had never heard of Sonia Johnson and probably perceived the Church—especially since its highly successful TV ad campaigns on family life—as the great American family-centered church, now have a new, more negative view of the Church. For the first week after Sonia was excommunicated, I felt defensive and embarrassed by all the comments from these friends. But now I just feel sad, and I pray heartily that women will have successes in teaching the Gospel to other women as President Kimball, in his recent Women's Fireside address, said they would in these last days. It will require the support and efforts of many of us to counter the effects of the Church's bad image caused by the current publicity.

In addition to potential converts, Mormons themselves have been affected by Sonia's excommunication. For some people, what they perceive as the "calling on the carpet" of an outspoken LDS feminist has been a comfort. They see in Sonia's excommunication an affirmation of the traditional family style and clear-cut sex roles. Still other Mormons are concerned about church/state questions. Many members

simply long for clarity.

But of all the groups that concern me, I have thought most about the impact of this event on LDS women. Women have indicated by their intense curiosity, by their fearfulness in discussing the subject, by their often fierce reactions to Sonia, or by their own statements, that the excommunication of Sonia Johnson means something to them personally. Even those who insist that this is a singular and specific case outside the stewardship of all onlookers often comment that perhaps it should be taken as a warning to other women in the Church to more closely follow Church leadership. One friend wondered if she would be forced to curtail her activities in behalf of daycare centers. Another half-jokingly warned me that she might one day be excommunicated for protesting the absence of changing tables in the men's rooms of LDS chapels. I smiled at her statement, but at the same time it occurred to me that many of us have taken this situation personally.

Without forgetting the seriousness of the problems this issue has created, I have had some very good feelings, too, about what all this means for LDS women. Official statements have urged well-informed action by Church members on matters political. Many of us have paid only lip-service to this notion with regards to the ERA. The current publicity has found many of us unprepared for the questions being asked of us by our friends. Several women have told me that because they have been asked tough questions about why the Church has taken an anti-ERA stand, they are seriously reading and thinking about these issues. I believe in this process of gathering information and thinking through our position on issues which have become important nationally and in the eyes of the Church.

In the Gospel Doctrine class which I teach, I have been struck with the example of Joseph Smith as the truth-seeker. So often, beautiful revelations came to him only after he struggled with a problem and faithfully questioned the Lord. For the last 10 years, people have raised rhetorical questions about what the women's movement means for LDS women and what the special challenges are for women in these last days. Because of the events of this past month or two, such questions have been treated with a new seriousness which I find very reassuring. I am excited by the fact that this new decade seems to be dawning with these questions clearly before us.

I personally have had some very meaningful discussions with LDS women over what Sonia's excommunication means to each



of us. I have also talked more with my non-LDS women friends about differences and similarities in Mormon and non-Mormon perceptions of women's roles, callings and goals than ever before. I feel good about having been forced to consider my own views on the ERA. All the confusion I have experienced over this issue has brought me more frequently to my knees than has been my recent custom. While I cannot report that this has brought me the clarity of insight that I had sought on the specifics of this case, communion with the Lord has its own sweet rewards.

Despite my fluctuations of feelings about the subject, right now I sense that it is worth the frustration and turmoil to see this crisis through—to pray, to continue our usual Church service, to have faith in the process and in the outcome. Perhaps this is all just part of our own special refiner's fire. Surely great challenges and great rewards await us.

WAR

Meghan Raynes | Denver, Colorado | Combined from two blog posts originally posted on March 26th and April 4th of 2012

I was seven months pregnant in October of 2010 when my midwife alerted me to the fact that my chosen post-pregnancy method of birth control, a copper IUD, might not be available. A proposed amendment to the state of Colorado's constitution was seeking to codify the rights of the unborn at the moment of conception. If Amendment 62, or the "Personhood" Amendment, was passed many forms of birth control, including the IUD, would no longer be available for fear that they would prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in a woman's uterus.

The Personhood Amendment had already been defeated by the people of Colorado in 2008, yet the backers of this initiative had the hubris to believe that they knew better than the electorate and that they had the right to make women's reproductive choices. It wasn't enough for these people to not use those forms of birth control themselves; they actively sought to take away my right to make medical choices regarding my own body. For a variety of reasons which I won't explain and shouldn't have to explain, the copper IUD was the only form of birth control that would work for me. But those who support policies like the Personhood Amendment don't care about individual circumstances. They don't care about medical realities. They don't care about a woman's quality of life. They believe that protecting even the remotest possibility of life is more important than all of the collateral damage it does to those lives already in existence.

I have heard some argue that the term "war on women" is overblown and irresponsible political rhetoric. Such an argument is the privilege of those who have full control over their bodies. Had the Fetal Personhood Amendment passed in my state I would not have had full control over my body. I can tell you, that felt like an attack. I felt like my very life was being threatened.

Research has consistently shown that women's empowerment and reproductive freedom are inextricably tied. With the advent of affordable, easily accessible and reliable contraception pregnancy is no longer the defining fact of a woman's life. Control over reproduction has opened worlds for women that were formally dominated by men. Threatening reproductive freedom also threatens the gains women have made and once again, biology may become our destiny.

Peer-reviewed research shows that the status of women, which includes women's autonomy and reproductive freedom, dramatically predicts the incidence of violence against women. States that have the highest number of restrictions on abortions and contraception also report the highest rates of violence against women. The message society sends when women are given full bodily autonomy is that we are fully human and have the right to physical integrity. There is legitimate fear that this sustained "conversation" about reproductive freedom has cast doubt in the minds of some on whether women have the right to bodily autonomy and are thereby, fully human.

Indeed, America is already seeing the consequences of this play out in legislation that threatens the physical security of women. It is no coincidence that what started as a coordinated effort against reproductive rights has taken the country to a place where the decriminalization of domestic violence in Topeka, Kansas, is seen as an appropriate mean to solve fiscal problems, and where the Violence Against Women Act can go un-renewed because of the opposition and posturing of a mainstream political party.

We do not have data yet on whether there has been an uptick in violence perpetrated against women, but it will be surprising to no one if there is. While male pundits and politicians have been arguing over whether women have the right to control their own bodies, perpetrators have already decided that they don't. And the fact that this is even an issue up for debate only validates the misogynistic worldview of abusers and rapists. This fight is about so much more than reproductive freedom. This war is about our humanity and it is personal to us. If we lose this war, we will have lost everything. ❀

THE REPUBLICANS' *Women Problem*

Do Mormon men and women differ politically? | By David Campbell • Granger, Indiana

Is there a gender gap among Mormons? Every election season, pundits remind us all that there is a gender gap among American voters, as women favor Democrats over Republicans. The root cause of the gap is the Republicans' women problem. It is not that men have flocked to the Republicans, but that women have left their ranks to join with the Democrats. With Mormons in the national spotlight like never before, this raises the interesting question of whether we see the same gender gap among Latter-day Saints. Do Mormon men and women differ politically?

The short answer is: Yes, they do. But the gender gap is less in the party they support than the positions they hold on the major issues of the day. While Mormon women are mostly conservative, they have a more moderate—one might even say compassionate—flavor of conservatism than Mormon men.

All of the results I report here come from a nationally representative survey of 500 Mormons that I conducted in January of 2012, along with my colleagues Quin Monson (BYU) and John Green (University of Akron). Five hundred people may not sound like a lot, but for a scientific poll of a smallish group like Mormons, this is a large enough sample size to have statistical confidence in our findings. (Eventually our findings will be published in a book, tentatively titled *Seeking the Promised Land: Mormons and American Politics*).

The first thing to note about Mormons is that they are heavily Republican—more so than any other religious group in America. In 2008, of those Mormons who cast a ballot for either John McCain or Barack Obama, 83 percent chose McCain. There was a hint of a gender gap, as 85 percent of LDS men voted for McCain compared to 81 percent of women, but that difference is obviously minor. Similarly, Mormon men are slightly more

likely to identify as Republicans than are women, although the difference is mostly in the strength of their attachment to a Republican affiliation. Forty percent of LDS men describe themselves as strong Republicans, compared to 29 percent of women.

The gender gap is slightly more pronounced among Mormons who believe that women should have more say in the Church, a question meant to gauge attitudes toward gender roles among Mormons. Among women who would like more say, 30 percent voted for President Obama. Among men who think women should play a greater role in the Church, 20 percent voted for the President.

While these results suggest a whisper of a gender gap, the headline story is the overwhelming Republican-ness of Latter-day Saints. This is not to say, though, that LDS women and men always share the same political views. On virtually every issue that might matter in the 2012 election, Mormon women are to the left of Mormon menfolk. And unlike the differences in party preference and the 2008 presidential vote, these gender gaps do not vary according to one's opinion on the role of women in the Church.

For example, LDS women are more likely than men to approve of abortion, although the differences are slight. Borrowing from a standard question used by other pollsters, we asked our respondents whether they would approve of abortion in a series of circumstances. On two situations in which LDS policy approves of abortion — rape and endangerment to the mother's health — men and women are equally, and overwhelmingly, likely to approve of abortion. When "there is a strong chance of a defect in the baby," women are eight percentage points more likely to approve than men (37 versus 29 percent).

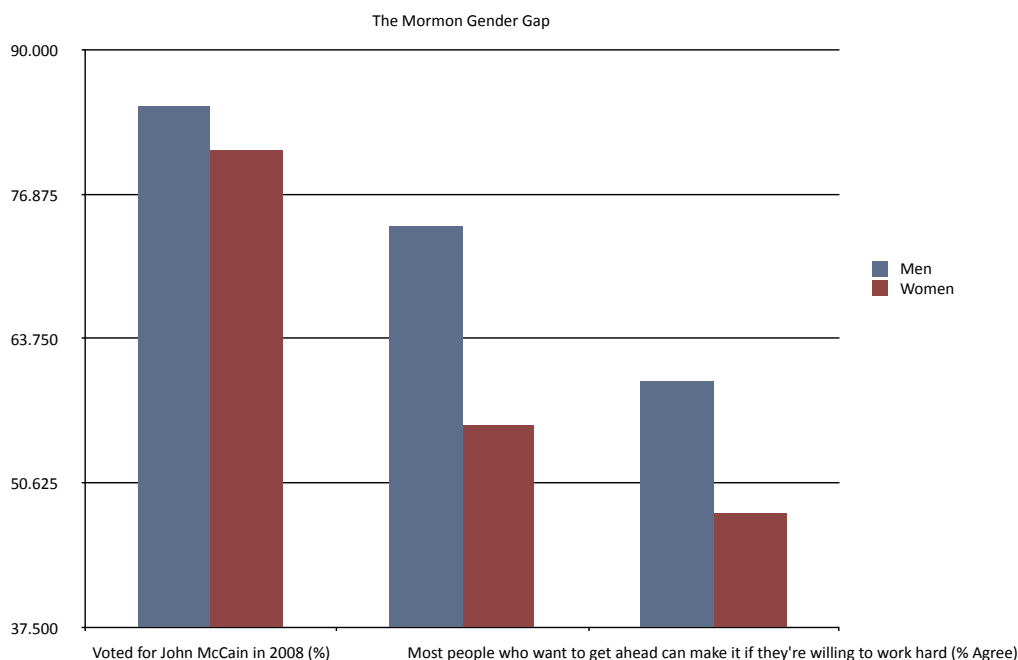
While the level of approval is markedly lower, there are similar gender differences for the other situations polled: the woman is unmarried, she is poor and cannot afford another child, she is married and does not want more children, or she wants the abortion for “any reason.”

The story is similar for the other “sex and family” issues in the current political ether. I suspect no one would have predicted that we would be debating birth control in 2012, but between the health care reform law’s contraception mandate and Rush Limbaugh’s subsequent comments on the matter, the issue is on the table. Virtually all Mormons approve of birth control for married couples, but LDS women are more likely to approve “strongly” of contraception. While Mormons as a whole express strong opposition to same-sex marriage, LDS women are slightly more likely to approve (15 percent) than are men (eight percent). Mormon women are also more likely to agree that gay couples should be allowed to adopt children. Gay adoption is an especially interesting issue, since unlike marriage, LDS leaders have not taken a visible public position on the subject. Presumably this is the reason that Mormons are more supportive of gay adoption than gay marriage. Among LDS women, 40 percent approve of adoption by gay couples, compared to 27 percent of men who approve.

However, the biggest gender differences are not on issues that deal with sex and family, but guns and butter. LDS women

are more likely to favor the Palestinians over the Israelis and support government help for the needy. They are more likely to support environmental regulation and to believe that immigrants strengthen the U.S. They are less likely to favor the death penalty and repeal of the new health care reform law. But the widest gender gap is on the central issue of the 2012 presidential election—the size, scope, and purpose of government. While 74 percent of Mormon men completely agree that “the government should be smaller and offer fewer services,” only 56 percent of women do. This difference of opinion mirrors the gender gap in the answer to the statement, “most people who want to get ahead can make it if they’re willing to work hard”—48 percent of women agree, compared to 60 percent of men. LDS women, it appears, are more likely to favor a publicly provided safety net for those who are met with hardship.

What does this all mean for election night in 2012? Republican candidates are certain to win big among Mormons once again. This will be the case whether candidates have the last name of Romney or if the voters are Mormons that have a Y chromosome. Yet at the same time, LDS women are much less supportive of the sharp turn to the ideological right that the Republican party, including Governor Romney, has recently taken. Republican candidates, especially those running in districts with many LDS voters, would be wise to take heed, lest they end up with a Mormon women problem. ❄️



Dave Campbell is a professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. He is the co-author of American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us. His current project, Seeking the Promised Land: Mormons and American Politics, is forthcoming in 2013.

AMERICAN POLITICS, EH?

As the campaign for the 2012 presidency goes forward, Canadians will hotly debate the various goings-on in U.S. government. Those of us in Alberta will likely hear a lot of support for Romney and Republicans.

By Marta Nelson • Calgary, Alberta, Canada

I recall having an argument about politics with my father when I was 16. I had just learned about the Vietnam War in school and was outraged. Back and forth we went, he the conservative political philosophy scholar and I the starry-eyed feminist left-winger (well, as much as you can be at 16). We reached a point in the argument where we had gone over the usual suspects of 20th century atrocities enacted by the United States government. By then I doubt we knew what the original fight was even about. I don't recall the context this comment came from, but I remember taunting my dad by saying, "Well, who was Joseph McCarthy, then?" He responded by turning a dark red, then sputtering and shouting, "A loyal American!"

Variations on this scene have likely played out numerous times in U.S. cities between other naïve children and their jaded parents. The only thing different about my scenario is that we weren't in the U.S. Our argument took place in Canada. So why were we passionately arguing about American politics?

Canada is of course affected by the United States; there's no way around it. We get a lot of American media and it would be impossible to block it out entirely. But Canadians do pay a lot of attention to American politics. Despite the fact that we have our own rich political history, a completely different system of government, and our own cherished celebrities and scandals, it's a relatively benign (read: dull) political climate compared to the U.S. American politics are simply more salacious and exciting. Sorry, Canada, but you know it's true.

One factor that makes American politics so fascinating to us is the conflation of religion and government. It rarely happens in Canada. In fact, religion is considerably downplayed. Our current Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, is an active Christian, but I can't even imagine him or another prominent Canadian politician admitting that his or her decisions are based in

theology. There's no doubt it does influence his or other politicians' motives, but it's far more subtle. The majority of the country simply wouldn't stand for it. And when I say majority, I am of course excluding the southern portion of the province of Alberta.

Southern Alberta houses the largest concentration of LDS people in Canada. A group of Latter-day Saints were sent from Utah to settle in Canada in the late 1880s and 30 years later they built the first temple outside of the U.S. As a result, the rural communities and larger towns and cities in the area have a very high Mormon population. As religious people often fall on the right side of the political spectrum, it's no coincidence

that the politics in that region tend to run more conservative than the rest of the country. For example, Alberta recently held a provincial election. A colour-coded map showing how each region of the province voted was marked by a pocket of bright green in the southern-most part of the province, indicating the more extreme right-leaning party, the Wildrose. To most people, especially Mormons, this was not a surprise.

"MORMONS ARE A PEOPLE with a history of passion and action, and I would love to see Canadian Mormons GETTING MORE INVOLVED in their country's DIRECTION AND FUTURE."

Mitt Romney's bid for the U.S. presidency has undoubtedly raised the Mormon profile worldwide, and in Canada this will mean further identifying Mormonism with conservative politics and again the province of Alberta. Being the most conservative province with the country's financial powerhouse, thanks to the oil sands, Alberta tends to be Canada's political whipping post. (Americans, it may help to think of Alberta as the Texas of the north.) People already associate Romney with the more negative or unusual aspects of Mormonism. In Canada those feelings will likely be transferred to Mormons and consequently Alberta in general.

The fact that Mormonism is an American-based religion, combined with a Canadian preoccupation with U.S. politics,

means that Canadian Mormons tend to especially latch on to American political topics. There are of course Canadian Mormons who are interested and active in Canadian politics, but in my experience, they are not the majority. I find it discouraging that when discussing political issues with other LDS Canadians, we are far more likely to debate about personhood arguments and health care rulings in the U.S. than similar concerns affecting our own country.

I wonder if this is due to the fact that a lot of the “hot button” issues such as universal health care, abortion, and gay marriage are not up for debate in Canada. Everyone has medical coverage, women can have at least partially if not fully-funded abortions, and gay marriage has been legal since 2005. (That sentence is of course subject to a lot of “yes, but” arguments, but that’s a much longer discussion.) And even if there’s a hint that someone is stirring the pot, it’s usually ignored. Recently, Motion 312 went through Parliament. This bill was to introduce a study to determine when life begins, and it was assumed the findings of this study would be used in future abortion debates. The motion was quickly dismissed and struck down, but even among Mormons of my acquaintance it wasn’t a big topic for debate. However, had it happened in Montana, I imagine such an event would have made national waves. Perhaps Canadian Mormons become interested in such topics because, given current Church teachings, they already have strong views on issues like gay marriage or abortions, and in the U.S. the possibility exists that the rulings could change the laws to their

liking. In Canada, Mormons already understand there’s little chance of that happening.

In my experience, conservative LDS Canadians are very enthusiastic about having a Mormon in the running for the U.S. presidency. It raises our profile, for better or worse, and there is an assumption that an LDS president would lead the U.S. according to his religious beliefs (aka the “right” way). I would, however, be surprised to hear anything about any developments in Canadian legislation. I do like that Canadian politics don’t find their way into our church meetings very often, but as Canadian Mormons I think our disinterest and apathy toward our own government is a failing.

I don’t care that Canadian and specifically Albertan Mormons are more conservative; that would be an exercise in futility. However, I do care that we focus more on what’s happening next door instead of in our own backyards. Because we tend to focus on our American-based church and a large portion of our media is from the U.S., we come by our obsession honestly. But we do ourselves a disservice.

Mormons are a people with a history of passion and action, and I would love to see Canadian Mormons getting more involved in their country’s direction and future. I eagerly await the day when I have heated political arguments with my future children. I’ll discuss any topic they wish, so long as we make sure to include Canada. ❄️



Artist Unknown

WHAT MORMON FEMINISTS *want to say during* THE 2012 ELECTIONS

My goal is broader: to argue that Mormon women of all political persuasions are needed to speak from a place of faith in setting a new course for American politics in the 21st century.

By Joanna Brooks • San Diego, California

As I sit to write this, the two most powerful Mormon politicians in the country are engaged in very public verbal fisticuffs over a set of tax returns. One man refuses to release a full set of his returns, as has been customary for presidential candidates, and the other refuses to let the issue drop. In the course of the exchange, the men and their political operatives have called each other “liars” and “cowards” and “henchmen” and even “pederasts.” I wish I were kidding.

But the interests of children are hardly setting the public agenda. In the state where I live, there is not enough money to properly staff and run the public schools. The college students I teach at an affordable public university (now largely defunded by the state) are facing terrible employment prospects. And 40 percent of American children live beneath the poverty line. These are the things that worry me, as a Mormon, a feminist, and a mother, every day. I know they are on the minds of other Mormon women too—across the political spectrum.

It is a moment of jarring disconnects in American political life. Serious challenges face this nation on every front, from financial to foreign policy. Our old assumptions about plotting prosperity and our old American models for interacting with the rest of the world are in need of retuning. The fruits of failed policies of intervention and neocolonization in Iraq and Afghanistan are incredible debt and maimed and disabled young men and women. These are bitter fruits to leave to our children. This is precisely the kind of historical moment—a time of realignment and reorientation of our priorities—when faith should play a role in helping us find our moral and political bearings. This year, Mormons have the historic opportunity of seeing a member of the LDS Church run as the presidential candidate

of a major political party, and perhaps even winning the office. But as someone who has watched this race in the making closely—every day—for the last three years, it feels to me that Mormonism and faith in general are deeply disconnected from politics.

Yes, LDS people have lined up to support Governor Romney, and they have donated handsome sums to his campaign. But as I scrutinize his policy positions, I find that none of Governor Romney’s stances—aside from his opposition to civil same-sex marriage—bear any special imprint of Mormon doctrine or values. In fact, on matters like Islamic relations and immigration, Governor Romney stands to the right of the dispositions modeled in official LDS Church statements and reiterates positions taken by his Republican predecessors, such as George W. Bush. His policy on foreign relations is hawkish and neoconservative, and his chosen advisors have indulged from time to time in open anti-Islamism. The Church has called for comprehensive federal immigration reform that supports the needs of families and encourages neighbors to love one another, but Governor Romney supports self-deportation by undocumented immigrants, an unrealistic answer to a complicated problem. His policy on economics is not just aggressively anti-regulation, but anti-state, a legacy of the political lobbyist Grover Norquist, who famously quipped that he’d like to shrink government to the size where he could “drown it in a bathtub.”

I say these things not to attack Governor Romney, though it is true that as a long-time Democrat I won’t be voting for him this fall. Nor do I wish to claim that political stances associated with the Democratic party on issues like foreign policy and the

environment and health care are inherently more aligned with Mormonism.

My goal is broader: to argue that Mormon women of all political persuasions are needed to speak from a place of faith in setting a new course for American politics in the 21st century.

The most Mormon thing I've identified about Governor Romney's campaign is the nervous and defensive way in which he has conducted it. Governor Romney is notorious among the press assigned to follow him for refusing to engage directly, to entertain open questions, or to dialogue. This, I strongly believe, stems in part from his longtime experience in LDS hierarchy and his fear as an LDS person that his faith will be ridiculed if he opens himself to more robust exchanges. That's a 170-year reality for Mormon public figures. Indeed, the political history of the Mormon people often finds us voting defensively against an array of perceived threats—to establish and protect our autonomy and security during the 19th century, to make sure our families had enough resources to survive during the Depression, and then, in the later 20th century, to defend what we were led to believe were secular assaults on Mormon concepts of home and family.

Among Mormon women, though, I find the capacity to think more grandly and courageously about the role of our faith in politics. In May, visiting a Mormon feminist retreat in the Rocky Mountains, I asked the women gathered what was the most important political message Mormon women had to convey to the world. After a few minutes discussing amongst themselves, they were univocal and firm: We believe that every human being is a child of God and deserves a chance for a decent, healthy life. That's a message that resonates deeply with me, as a Mormon, a feminist, and a mother.

The role of faith in politics has been narrowed over the past few decades to a few hot-button social issues, such as reproductive choice and same-sex marriage. While these are important issues, there are much broader questions that we've lost our footing on as people of faith. Political think tanks who follow the Grover Norquist school of thought have been on an extremely aggressive mission to defund and destroy government, arguing

aggressively that no government is good government, even though the historical record of the 20th century clearly shows that government has played a crucial role in fostering economic development, improving living conditions, developing infrastructure, providing education, and offering health care to senior citizens and the poor. Government has also been receptive to the influence of faith communities, who have been able to interface, lobby, and exert influence to advance civil rights, human rights, environmental justice, and women's rights. How successful have people of faith been in convincing corporations to pursue these values? Yet Grover Norquist and his anti-tax

allies have manipulated people of faith to believe that government opposes our interests and is hostile to religion in general. They've focused all of our energy around a few narrowly defined hot-button issues and left us fighting with one another over fiercely personal choices. Meanwhile, on much broader political landscapes—landscapes that determine the movement of resources and the distribution of life opportunities—our voices are muted, if not absent.

"We believe that every human being is a child of God and deserves a chance for a decent, healthy life. That's a message that resonates deeply with me, as a Mormon, a feminist, and a mother."

I love the courageous global vision of the Mormon feminists who told me that our message should be that every human being is a child of God and deserves a shot at a decent life. This is a clarifying, reframing vision that transcends the futile fistfights of partisanship and draws from our deepest commitments as women and mothers.

This is the kind of vision that's missing from politics in this Mormon moment. Perhaps when Mormon women have our say . . . or, rather, perhaps it's time for Mormon women to just say that we can—and we must—do better. ❄



Patrick Macaulay • "Americani!" • Manchester, England

Thoughts on Romney AND HIS NOMINATION

Since Mitt Romney became the presumptive Republican Presidential nominee, Mormons in their many varieties have received unprecedented attention from the media. A recurring question *Exponent II* has received from numerous media outlets concerns how Mormon feminists feel about Romney as a representative of their religion. Now is the time to make your voice heard!

How do you feel about Romney's nomination and the fact that he and his family will become the most recognized representatives of Mormonism in the United States? How do or don't his policy positions represent core Mormon values you cherish?

SHERRIE GAVIN | QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

From a non-American perspective, I am quite excited to have a Mormon president. Prior to this year, the majority of Mormon content in the media was based on male American missionaries. This year, however, with Romney in the spotlight, I have seen quotes by Ardis Parshall, Margaret Toscano, and other Mormon scholars discussing women's issues. I personally cherish Mormon academia and smart women, and as Mormon historians and academics are being asked for their thoughts on Romney, their media presence has delighted me to no end. So with Romney comes an entourage of academia that to me represents a component of Mormonism that speaks to me. As such, Romney and his family are a powerful vehicle for Mormon academic and feminist values I cherish, even if these values are not necessarily represented by the Romney family.

ANDREA ALEXANDER | WINDHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Although I'm socially liberal, I'm a fiscal conservative. I am ecstatic about Romney's nomination. I don't want our country to follow down Europe's path to bankruptcy driven by socialist principles and the entitlement mentality. For me, it's all about the economy. I do care about pro-choice issues and marriage equality, but I don't believe Romney is as conservative on those issues as he would like the Religious Right to believe. I was a resident of Massachusetts when Mitt was governor. He's an

astute centrist on most social issues. Unfortunately, playing up conservative social values is a necessity for any Republican on the national stage.

I believe Romney's economic policies will represent the economic principles taught to me by my parents: hard work, self-sufficiency (whenever possible), ingenuity, living within your means, etc. I consider these values to be as much American as Mormon.

RACHEL HUNT STEENBLIK | LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Part of me loves the idea of having a Mormon in the presidency. From many stories I've read quoting people who actually know him, Romney seems like a decent enough person, and sometimes even a surprisingly giving person when it comes to real relations and real caring service. Those articles make me proud, and the attributes they describe are attributes I would like in a president. I feel less proud, however, when I read Romney's statements about the poor, and how he is not concerned about them. I understand that the snippet shared everywhere was just a snippet and belongs to a greater context. But, some of his policies, including those to weaken "safety nets" that he says the poor may rely upon, are part of that context. Deep down I think he is a true moderate, and I would find it much easier to whole-heartedly embrace him if he let those colors show.



Sophie Soprano/Lynn Farrar • "Broody Hen" • Spring City, Utah

Unfortunately, he has not acted or spoken like a moderate as of late.

On a final note, I do like that he is running, if only because the increased scrutiny on the Church resulted in the clearest statement from the Church against harmful folk beliefs concerning blacks and the priesthood. If it could bring additional examination with additional positive changes, then I am all for it.

ANONYMOUS READER

In the near decade that I have gotten to know him, Mitt has proven time and time again his generosity, pragmatism and fierce loyalty. His entire life is service-oriented, from his religious dedication in volunteer leadership to his commitment to public service in state and federal government. It is difficult to watch someone who has volunteered so much of his time and energy to making the world a better place be criticized in the public eye. That said, I'm not voting for him in November.

We live in a liberal democracy, which means that rather than voting on every issue individually we elect people to represent our interests. As a middle-class feminist, woman, mother, scientist and academic, who has spent significant time living in developing nations outside of the U.S., Mitt does not represent

my interests. And that is okay; that does not make him the villainous caricature often portrayed in the media. I'm not voting for Mitt, but I think he is a good person. He proved as governor of Massachusetts that final results were more important than partisan politics. Mitt is a product of his generation, education, gender, and socioeconomic status. I don't share his same economic, social, or foreign policy opinions, but I do think that many people in the nation do and that he will represent their interests well.

MARY J. GEORGE | ATHERTON, CALIFORNIA

This is the second presidential campaign in which I have volunteered for him, and most of the people I work with aren't Mormon, so rarely does his religion come up as a topic. Instead, what comes up is the fact that Mitt is a man of character, inner strength, and tremendous ability. My coworkers see him as a man who loves the United States, believes its best days are ahead, and wants every individual to have the freedom to mold their own life according to their choices. I have had the privilege to sit in strategy sessions with Mitt and have been so impressed with his leadership abilities. He is an amazing listener, and he especially takes note of what women have to say. Not only does he listen to women, he is well known for appointing women to high positions, such as his Chief of Staff while Governor of

Massachusetts. No candidate is ever perfect, but in my opinion, Mitt Romney is the right person to be president at this very turbulent time.

JUDITH DUSHKU | WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

As Mormons, we should be confident enough in “The World’s” ability to sort out what each of us stands for that we should not fear that one man’s image will destroy the good reputation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But it is understandable why we feel self-conscious about the new high-profile of Mormonism because Mitt is running for public office. After all, before this year our fear had been that we were unknown to everyone around us. Our wish was for people to notice and understand us. Now we feel that everyone “understands us,” but in my opinion the understanding is not “us” at all! I have known Mitt personally for decades and to me Mitt represents materialistic, elitist privilege—his behavior with regards to tax-paying goes beyond being disreputable but also mocks any purported LDS support for respecting the law of the land. Why would any loyal citizen urge wealthy outsiders to not pay taxes when we are in a widely-publicized deficit? Actually, why would anyone running for President admit he wanted others to be tax evaders even if we did not have a deficit? Whose side is Mitt on anyway? And for those I know who are passionate about reproductive freedom and other women’s rights, Mitt is problematic to say the least. Bishops in LDS wards do not question couples about birth control choices, so why is Mitt willing to bring the government into that conversation? Any Mormon woman who is concerned with advancing women’s rights and protecting their health choices would justifiably be expected to criticize our fellow Mormon for such political positions.

I grew up with my parents’ shame at publicity about polygamy. I fear my children’s generation will grow up feeling shame for being presumed to be arrogant, self-centered, and oblivious to the conditions of the lives of most Americans because people got acquainted with Mitt Romney and associate his actions and policies with Mormonism. I feel burdened and sad. It is not just that I want to distance myself from Mitt Romney’s candidacy and what he has come to represent, but I want to speak up for Mormonism among decent Americans who love this country and want to see it thrive and return to a day when we felt optimistic about our future as a nation.

D.H.R. | SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

As a Mormon woman I have been raised to believe in certain core beliefs, not the least of which is the importance of honesty, hard work, family, and service to our fellow man. As I look at Mitt Romney and his life’s history I see a man with the integrity to be bishop and stake president for obviously no monetary gain. He opted out of two years of college to serve a mission for no remuneration. He was governor for the state of Massachusetts and accepted no salary. Although his service record is exemplary and his financial feats nothing short of amazing, the real value of his character is shown in the love he has for his family and the fact that he helped raise his children with the help of his wife who suffers from MS. The fact that he has brought Mormonism under the spotlight is only a bonus for our Church as thousands more will be interested in investigating further into Mormon beliefs. Truly a win-win!

EMILY GILKEY | EUGENE, OREGON

When I first heard he was running, I was glad because I felt like he was a candidate I could live with, unlike many others in the field. I’m still not going to vote for him, but I thought if he won I could be okay with it. I was thinking of old Mitt, the one who was more tolerant, who could appeal to middle-of-the-road voters. However, the more I hear about his economic plans for the country, the less appealing I find him because I believe that his program would drive us deeper into the recession, if not into an outright depression.

I don’t feel like his ideals are particularly in harmony with gospel principles. I don’t see much compassion (as manifested by action or plans of action) from him for the poor or marginalized in our country. I see his economic programs as contrary to our obligations to the poor. I think he has it somewhat backward from King Benjamin—he would enable people who already have riches to seek more riches, and claims that this would somehow help the poor and everyone else.

In general I think the Romneys’ lifestyle is a bit of an affront in these deeply depressing times. I recognize they have a perfect right to spend their money how they choose, but to me it underscores how out of touch he is. I realize that a president is never going to have the same kind of intimate awareness as a bishop might about his flock, but I can’t help but feel he is so far removed from my life he can’t begin to imagine how his actions help or hinder it. ❄️

FLANNEL BOARD

Founding editor of *Woman's Exponent*, Louisa Greene Richards, wrote this song to the tune of "Hope of Israel," which was included in the *Utah Woman Suffrage Songbook*, published in 1870. Writing suffrage verses and setting them to well-known melodies that they would sing at their suffrage meetings was common among Mormon women in the 19th century. Today, *Exponent II* continues the tradition of singing this song at our annual retreat and we proudly stand together each time we sing the chorus.

Woman, Arise

Louisa Greene Richards William Clayson

Piano

1. Free dom's daugh - ter rou - se fro - m slum - ber,
 2. Truth and vir - tue b - e th - y mo - tto,
 3. First to fall 'mid E - d - en 's bow - ers,

Pno.

See the cur - tains are with - drawn Which so long thy
 Temp - 'rance lib - e - r y and peace. Light shall shine and
 Through long suff - 'ri - ng wor - thy proved. With the fore - most

Pno.

mi - nd h - as shroud - ed Lo! Thy day b - e gins to dawn.
 da - rk - ne - ss van - ish. Love shall reign, o - pre - ssion cease
 cla - im th - y par - don, When earth's curse sh - all be re - moved.

Pno.

Wo - man, 'rise, thy pen - ance o'er, Sit thou in th - e dust no more,

Pno.

Seize the scep - ter, hold the van, e - qual with th - y bro - ther, man.



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How the Military INFLUENCED MY POLITICS

I came home from Iraq with widened eyes and an open mind. | By Genevieve Zorc • Tempe, Arizona

On January 3, 2001, I took an oath to defend the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. I was nervous, excited, and completely unprepared for the culture shock that would come as I broke free from my insulated LDS world. It was the last thing my ward and my family expected of me. The adults in my ward were convinced I would become an apostate if I joined the military. I didn't listen to them.

During basic training (six weeks of folding t-shirts perfectly, learning to march, and qualifying on the M-16), I met people from all over the country. There were conservatives, liberals, Jews, Protestants, atheists. Everyone was different. I spent a lot of time trying to do missionary work.

I trained as an Arabic linguist, which meant spending 63 weeks in California at the Defense Language Institute. All of our instructors were native-born Arabic speakers from the

Middle East and Africa. These teachers often expressed strong opinions on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. I watched a lot of Al Jazeera, one of the largest news networks of the Arab world. Israeli retaliation for a suicide bombing often took the form of large-scale arrests or even the destruction of entire Palestinian neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the Israeli government continued to expand their own neighborhoods onto confiscated Palestinian land. I couldn't understand how Americans could justify supporting Israel while they were committing atrocities against the Palestinian people.

On the other hand, I had grown up with a strong belief in the "chosenness" of the Israeli people. Didn't God give them that land? My cognitive dissonance was resolved only when I came to the personal realization that God would never have approved of such retaliatory tactics, and that promised lands were reserved for the righteous. I jokingly proposed to my family then

that the best solution to the Israel/Palestine problem was to send a bunch of missionaries there and just convert the whole place to Mormonism. My conservative family usually talked about Arabs using terms like “raghead” or “camel jockey,” and proposed that the best solution to the problem was to launch nuclear warheads and turn all that sand into glass. I realized that my politics were starting to stray from my family when for the first time I really began to think about their “solution” and see the utter horror of it.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

“Hello?”

“Genevieve! Are you watching TV? Do you see what’s happening?”

“What are you talking about?”

“One of the World Trade Center towers just collapsed!”

“What?”

I hung up the phone and ran to the common room to turn on the news while I finished getting ready for class. And there it was: a smoking pile of rubble, with inset video of a plane crashing into the enormous building. My heart seized when I realized how many people must have been killed. Even the reporter lost control and started crying. I walked to the CQ (Charge of Quarters) hallway, and stood outside an office where my superiors were watching the news. I got there just in time to see the second tower collapse.

The following days, weeks, and months were a patriotic revival. I had every intention of getting revenge on the bastards who attacked us, and I couldn’t understand why anyone was hesitant.

I held on to my sanity enough to realize that not all Muslims are terrorists—after all, most of my language instructors were Muslim and they were just as horrified at the death and destruction as I was.

JANUARY 1, 2006

I arrived in Tikrit, Iraq, in the middle of the night. It was cold and dusty and I was nervous about creepy crawlies. I got five hours of sleep that night, huddled on an army cot and listening to distant explosions. I was there for six months. I spent most of my time on military bases, shrieking at camel spiders and diving into bunkers if some of the explosions got too close.

Most of the soldiers around me despised the Iraqi people. They had all lost friends in the violence that rocked the country during those years. I tried to remain objective and look at my job as

protecting coalition troops. I didn’t think too deeply on the fact that my job was contributing to the deaths of real people—they were just insurgents, lackeys of the big-name terrorists who wanted to hurt us. I was a patriot!

MARCH 16, 2006

Five minutes after a friend left our work station to wait outside for transportation to the mess hall, a mortar round hit the cement barrier in front of the building I worked in. The entire building shook, and I remember looking up and wondering if the ceiling was going to collapse. My OIC (Officer in Charge) came running in and looked at me with a pale face. “They got Pinson.” My friend and another co-worker had both been killed.

The next few weeks were somewhat blurred with grief and anxiety, and I found myself truly understanding how hatred for another nationality worked. Too many of the Iraqi people were facilitating the activities of the insurgents without standing up for themselves. We were fighting their fight for them, and people were dying. I hated them.

It took me months to come to a mental and emotional place where I could stop actively hating Iraqis. The teachings of Jesus on forgiveness and love worked on me slowly, but surely. His words on love and forgiveness sank deeper than they ever had, because I had never needed them so much. Those words stayed with me and made me truly question the nationalistic values I had grown up with.



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JULY 2006

I came home from Iraq with widened eyes and an open mind. I married a registered Independent. I lived in the southern United States for a while, and heard the rhetoric of staunch Conservatives both within and outside of the military community. At the same time I was making politically liberal friends who were vocal about their political views. I started to listen.

NOVEMBER 2008

"Hi, my name is Genevieve and I was just wondering which way you intended to vote for Prop 8 . . . So I can put you down for a yes, then? Thanks so much for your time."

I hung up the phone, feeling numb. Why wasn't I feeling the same soaring inspiration that seemed to be glowing from the faces of the callers around me? We sat in the bishop's small business, using his phones to "collect data" on public opinion while also encouraging people to get out and vote. Priesthood leaders had come to the ward and strongly encouraged us to become active politically. I had several gay friends at the time, and I could not support any of the arguments that claimed that if my friends got married it would somehow destroy families. The only thing I used to justify my participation was the philosophy that government shouldn't interfere with marriage.

Only churches should have the right to marry people, and the government could perform civil unions. I felt sick to my stomach while I manned those phones. I couldn't muster a smile to my face. My heart was literally hurting. I really believe now that the Spirit was telling me not to facilitate this hateful law.

JULY 2009

I separated from the military to have my son. My heart and mind were full of the things I had learned while in service to my country, and had left me ready to learn about feminism and equality. I had worked with several excellent superior officers who were not only female but mothers and wives. They didn't destroy their families by going to work. In most cases, they had enough money to stay home if they wanted to. But they were very good at their jobs. Their personalities and talents were

tailor-made for leadership positions in the military.

I also began to consider politics from the perspective of the teachings of Jesus: "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." (Mark 10:21) He didn't say "Go thy way, keep all of thy things and create jobs," or "Go thy way and keep thy things because thou hast earned them and it is theft for the government to tax thee," or "Judge the homeless and poor, for they have not pulled themselves up by their bootstraps, and therefore have not earned a place with thee at thy table."

FEBRUARY 2011

I went back to school. Because I had already been studying tribal cultures of the world, I chose to major in anthropology, and thus seemed to seal my fate as a liberal. My eyes were opened to the suffering and crushing poverty experienced by people in my own country. It wasn't laziness, greed, or a poor work ethic that kept them living in hovels or violence-ridden areas. It was politics. It was a lack of opportunity and education resulting from mismanaged or insufficient funding. Small charities and philanthropy are not enough. One starving child is one too many.

JULY 2012

Today I am a registered Independent with strongly liberal views. I am a feminist and an intellectual. Every chance I get I try to repent for my actions during Prop 8. My Facebook page is peppered with links to websites reporting on feminist, pro-gay marriage, and environmental issues.

The military has my eternal gratitude for pulling me away from my emotional and physical dependence on my conservative family and for introducing me to the bright and colorful world of diversity. I thank God/dess that my insulated world was destroyed and I could finally see the precious humanity around me without the blinders of righteous bigotry or privilege. ✨

"THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS on forgiveness and love worked on me slowly, but surely. His words on love AND FORGIVENESS sank deeper than they ever had, BECAUSE I HAD NEVER needed them so much. THOSE WORDS STAYED with me & made me question the nationalistic values I HAD GROWN UP WITH."

SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS: *The Gospel in Action*

We will certainly form a more perfect union as we choose leaders whose priority is the welfare of the people, who will work towards a goal of having "no poor among us".

By: Karlyn Hiatt Lewis • Fairfield, CA

THE CONSTITUTION

In today's political debates, we hear a lot of banging on the "Constitutional drum." "That's unconstitutional!" or "We need to return to the origins of the Constitution!" Of course, these statements imply that "they" know what the Founding Fathers really intended.

Unfortunately, the Founding Fathers aren't here to take sides. Even if they were, they had a pretty hard time agreeing amongst themselves back in their day, so it's unclear if they would help or hinder modern-day disagreements regarding constitutionality. And what about the definition of "Founding Fathers"? Are we talking about those who signed the document, those who helped write it, those who influenced its tenets, those who fought for the independence that made it possible, or all of the above? Regardless of who's a Founding Father or what one's stance is on the Constitution, it really boils down to a political interpretation.

As Latter-day Saints, we learn that our Founding Fathers were inspired by God to create a framework for our nation that would establish a state conducive to the restoration of the Gospel. The LDS Church's First Presidency has counseled its members to study the Constitution: "[We] should be familiar with its great fundamentals: the separation of powers, the individual guarantees in the Bill of Rights, the structure of federalism, the sovereignty of the people, and the principles of the rule of the law. [We] should oppose any infringement of these inspired fundamentals."¹

In addition to learning its fundamentals, if we as Church members believe that the Constitution was "suffered to be established" by the hand of the Lord (see D&C 101:76-80), then we also ought to understand its purpose. President J. Reuben Clark declared, "The Constitution was framed in order to protect minorities. That is the purpose of written constitutions."²

What we do *not* believe is that the Constitution is perfect.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks has stated:

Reverence for the United States Constitution is so great that sometimes individuals speak as if its every word and phrase had the same standing as scripture. Personally, I have never considered it necessary to defend every line of the Constitution as scriptural President J. Reuben Clark, who referred to the Constitution as "part of my religion," also said that it was not part of his belief or the doctrine of the Church that the Constitution was a "fully grown document." "On the contrary," he said, "we believe it must grow and develop to meet the changing needs of an advancing world." That was also the attitude of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He faulted the Constitution for not being "broad enough to cover the whole ground."³

The idea that "We believe [the Constitution] must grow and develop to meet the changing needs of an advancing world" is anathema to many "Constitutional Drummers" who call for a rollback of the Constitution to the end of the 18th century. So what do we need to know in order to continue "form[ing] a more perfect union?" As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a wealth of information contained in our teachings. Serious scripture study can help us learn about what makes righteous and effective leaders or societies, and that study can aid us as we prepare to cast our vote.

LEADERS

A single leader can have a profound effect—for good or for bad—on any group of people. As we evaluate candidates for leadership, the Book of Mormon can serve as a guide for our choices.

President Ezra Taft Benson once stated:

The Book of Mormon was written for our day Not only should we know what history and faith-promoting stories it contains, but we should understand its teachings. If we

really do our homework and approach the Book of Mormon doctrinally, we can expose the errors and find the truths to combat many of the current false theories and philosophies of men.⁴

The Book of Mormon presents us with two prominent leaders who were polar opposites: King Noah and King Benjamin.

King Noah “placed his heart upon his riches.” His only goal was to accumulate riches for himself and his cronies. These were not *noblesse oblige* aristocrats; they were lazy and idolatrous, they spent their time “in riotous living,” and used lying, flattering words to deceive the people. To pay the taxes that funded his extremely lavish lifestyle, King Noah’s people had to “labor exceedingly” (see Mosiah 11).

King Benjamin, on the other hand, “labored with [his] own hands that [he] might serve [his people], and that [they] should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon [his people] which was grievous to be borne . . .” He did not seek “gold nor silver nor any manner of riches” from his subjects (Mosiah 2:12, 14). In fact, he saw himself as a servant to his people, and emphasized their commonality by asking, “are we not all beggars?” (Mosiah 4:19) He further taught them that in order to “walk guiltless before God,” they “should impart of [their] substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants” (Mosiah 4:26).

For King Noah, it was all about money—money for him regardless of its effect on others. His lack of concern for the welfare of his people set them up for destruction. King Benjamin viewed himself as no different and no better than his people. He saw the welfare of others as the most important concern they should have. By promoting a broad social welfare program to meet the temporal and spiritual needs of his people, he led them to prosperity and happiness.

SOCIETY

The concept of an ideal society has been widely discussed through the ages. Both ancient and modern scriptures call a perfect society “Zion.” When Zion is mentioned in the scriptures, it doesn’t say anything about individual liberty, free market economy, or limited federal government. Instead we read, “there were no poor among them” (4 Ne. 1:3, Moses 7:18), and “they had all things common” (Acts 2:44, Acts 4:32, 3 Ne. 26:19, 4 Ne. 1:3).

In addition, the Doctrine and Covenants continually cautions against inequality within a society. Two examples are: “For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things” (D&C 78:6); “. . . in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise

the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld” (D&C 70:14). (See also D&C 49:20, D&C 51:9, D&C 82:17)

If we take these passages at face value, what are the first steps to eliminating societal inequality? Let’s begin with the question, *How much should the poor receive?* Minimum wage, poverty wage, a living wage? No, according to the scriptures, they should receive “according to their wants.” I have heard discussions regarding whether “wants” in this context means the poor’s *desires* or their *needs*. Perhaps we should ask ourselves, “What does it really matter, as long as I have enough food and raiment?” If we are content with that (see 1 Tim. 6:8), there is no need to be caught up in a semantics game.

Then, *How do we go about acquiring the funds to lift the poor?*

“... by humbling the rich and proud.” (D&C 84:112)

“... the poor shall be exalted in that the rich are made low.” (D&C 104:16)

These scriptures suggest a redistribution of wealth, and I don’t see any “free will” constraints to the concept as outlined in the Doctrine & Covenants. In fact, the verb choice in “humbling the rich and proud” not only gives the sense of being contrary to the will of those people but also a blow to their self image.

Richard E. Johnson, formerly a professor of Sociology at Brigham Young University, makes the case that socioeconomic strife may well be the “unprecedented evil” that plagues the last days, even more so than obvious sins like crime, violence, sexual immorality, and drug abuse. He states:

It seems to me that the most powerful and consistent scriptural warning given to those who live in the “last days” (as found particularly in the Book of Mormon) center around a single set of interwoven evils—the evils of materialism, consumerism, worldly vanity, and socioeconomic inequality. These traits and conditions are unequivocally condemned throughout the Book of Mormon. Moreover, they are generally described as the root from which the more commonly viewed “sins” take nourishment and as the ultimate cause of both personal and social destruction. In short, the prevalence of selfish striving for the “lifestyles of the rich and famous” (by both those who succeed and those who fail), and the consequent inequality that results, appear to be the most appropriate as criteria for assessing a society’s moral climate.⁵

This is certainly supported by what students of the Book of Mormon know as the “Pride Cycle,” the course a society follows from righteousness and prosperity, to pride and wickedness, to destruction and suffering, to humility and repentance, and then back around to the beginning. We get so outraged over

the problems we feel surround us today—sexual immorality, crime, governmental malfeasance, a decaying educational system, illegal immigration—but talk little about poverty.

Our government defines poverty as “lacking the resources to meet the basic needs for healthy living; having insufficient income to provide the food, shelter and clothing needed to preserve health.”⁶ And each night we sleep soundly while one in seven American citizens, many of them children, live in poverty.⁷ We do exactly that which King Benjamin cautioned us not to do: We shake our heads, assume that people have brought their predicament upon themselves, and stay our hands (see Mosiah 4:17). We have also allowed our government to create policies that exalt commerce while undermining the economic stability and therefore the general stability of families.

My family does what we can to help out others. But I also want my tax dollars to be used to help those in need. In fact, the welfare of others is the highest priority “moral value” that I consider in determining my vote. When I vote, I want candidates (and laws) that will support families and work towards eliminating poverty. Policies that support families and the poor include, but are not limited, to:

- wage structures that assure that those who work will not live in poverty
- tax law structure that places the greatest burden on those who have the most and closes tax loopholes that allow the wealthy to avoid paying their fair share
- consumer protections that include not only product safety but re-regulation of credit (mortgages, credit cards, payday loans, etc. that are designed to entrap)
- affordable, universal healthcare that will prevent illness from ruining families financially
- education reform that values and recruits the best and brightest teachers
- governmental spending on items that have demonstrated ability to promote economic growth (e.g., infrastructure projects, unemployment benefits, food stamps) instead of those which do not (e.g., corporate tax cuts, tax cuts for the wealthy, eliminating capital gains taxes)
- changes in aid to the poor that would 1) allow workers to transition back into jobs without losing their benefits until their employment supplies a commensurate amount, and 2) allow mothers with preschool children to stay at home if they desire

When I read the scriptures, I am led towards liberal attitudes and ideas. We have a God who gives to “all men liberally” (James 1:5), and we have His son, who ministered to the poor and the needy, the sick and afflicted, and who gave His life in atonement for others. I’m taught that I should beware of pride and its socioeconomic consequences, that I should be content with “food and raiment,” serve others, succor those who stand in need of succor, and impart of my substance to the poor.

Nowhere in the scriptures do I find any passage that says promoting the welfare of others can only be accomplished as individuals or as religious groups and should never be attempted by a government. Nowhere in the scriptures do I read that a “free market” is God’s true economy.

On an individual’s Facebook profile, one can state his or her “political views.” For mine I have used Alma 1:30:

And thus, in their prosperous circumstances, they did not send away any who were naked, or that were hungry, or that were athirst, or that were sick, or that had not been nourished; and they did not set their hearts upon riches; therefore they were liberal to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, whether out of the church or in the church, having no respect to persons as to those who stood in need.

Each of us decides on our own whether we are in prosperous enough circumstances to share with others. Years ago my husband said, “I think I would consider us independently wealthy if, when one of our kids needs new shoes, we could just go out and buy them.” And the time came when, by our own definition, we were “independently wealthy.” We should be careful to not define “prosperous circumstances” as an income bracket we never attain.

Remembering to count my blessings rather than numbering my needs is a daily struggle, and I wonder if I might not be better suited for a Law of Moses regimen. I do know that from the Ten Commandments to the Law of Moses to the Law of Consecration, God’s laws address the shoulds and shouldn’ts of our socio-economic circumstances. To me it follows that a God-inspired United States Constitution not only supported the restoration of the gospel, it also supports putting the restored gospel into action through government programs that serve the social welfare needs of a growing and diverse population. We will certainly form a more perfect union as we choose leaders whose priority is the welfare of the people, who will work towards a goal of having “no poor among us.”

NOTES

1. Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “The Divinely Inspired Constitution,” Ensign, February 1992, p68.
2. J. Reuben Clark: Selected Papers on Religion, Education, and Youth, ed. David H. Yarn, Jr., Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1984, p. 165.
3. Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “The Divinely Inspired Constitution,” Ensign, February 1992, p68.
4. President Ezra Taft Benson, “First Presidency Message: Jesus Christ—Gifts and Expectations,” Ensign, December 1988, p2.
5. Richard E. Johnson, “Socioeconomic Inequality: the Haves and the Have nots,” BYU Today, September 1990
6. Since the 1960s, the United States Government has defined poverty in absolute terms. When the Johnson administration declared “war on poverty” in 1964, it chose an absolute measure. The “absolute poverty line” is the threshold below which families or individuals are considered to be lacking the resources to meet the basic needs for healthy living; having insufficient income to provide the food, shelter and clothing needed to preserve health.
7. Erik Eckholm, “Recession Raises Poverty Rate to a 15 Year High,” The New York Times online, September 16, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/17/us/17poverty.html?_r=2



Pat Langmade • Paradise Valley, Arizona

THE INADVERTENTLY *Political Ward*

My view of church life in the District is filtered through the political lens inherent in the nation's capital. However, surprisingly, my ward is a staunchly apolitical space. | By Sylvia Cabus • Washington DC

I live in Washington, D.C., and feel lucky to belong to a diverse, urban ward. I first came to the District as a graduate student in international relations, and had recently returned to the United States after working in West Africa. My view of church life in the District is filtered through the political lens inherent in the nation's capital. Surprisingly, however, my ward is a staunchly apolitical space.

Like most members with families, the majority of Mormons involved in politics live in the suburbs, but our inner-city ward still hosts quite a few political connections. For example, our bishop is the Chief of Staff for a member of Congress from Utah, and the Congressman himself attends our ward. Our ward is also the longtime home of the widow of another prominent member of Congress. Her children attend the ward as well, and one of them is a senior policy advisor to Hillary Clinton. Senator

Reid's chief lawyer has been a member of our congregation, as well as a brother who works for CNN Espanol. The ward also boasts a large contingent of Arabic speakers working in academia and the public sector.

The 2010 Congressional elections brought a slew of presumably Tea Party visitors to the ward who had won their local contests, but none of them seem to have made their home within the ward boundaries, perhaps because finding affordable "family-friendly" real estate in the District is more challenging than in the Maryland or Virginia suburbs. Ward attendance ebbs and flows with the Congressional calendar; some members absent themselves during campaign season, and every summer the congregation seems to double due to the influx of interns, pages, and graduate and law school students. Like other wards with transient populations, the question is always, "How long

will you stay?" rather than what brought them here.

One of the most remarkable aspects of our ward is that the "political" members include both progressives and conservatives. For example, my visiting teacher works for the National Council of La Raza, which is the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States. The conservative members are open-minded enough to commit to living in the District, which is not the easiest place for Republicans because of the city's liberal tendencies, or for larger families due to the limited housing stock.

Despite the ward's location in the most political city in the country, and despite the fact that a large number of people in the congregation have some sort of political connection, partisanship rarely seeps into talks, lessons, or testimonies given in our ward. Perhaps partisanship does not surface in these areas because ward members tend not to display political affiliations except in incidental relation to their work, such as in 2008 when one of my teachers excused himself from the ward to volunteer on the first Romney campaign, or when one of the compassionate service opportunities was to help a sister pack up her apartment before she moved to Nevada for her new position as the deputy state director for the Obama campaign. When a political speech writer and his wife spoke in sacrament meeting, the bishop introduced the brother and said that he "writes talks for a living" without mentioning who his boss was.

Whenever a politically charged statement is made, it's usually via one of the missionary couples who are only assigned to our ward for a short period of time and are unaware of how diverse our congregation's political views are. Shortly after President Obama's inauguration, when one half of a missionary couple implied that Obama's administration was an impending sign of the apocalypse, a collective shudder of unease seemed to pass through our congregation. As politically active as our ward membership is, we know better than to talk politics at church.

Because of the physical distance, the discussion on California's Proposition 8 did not seem to publicly divide opinion in the same way it did on the West Coast. Probably the most contentious event to take place in our ward was when Glenn Beck came to visit. As far as I know, no one said anything confrontational to him, although some members told me that it was difficult to think charitable thoughts. One sister actually bore her testimony the following fast Sunday, saying that his visit was a real exercise in self-control and compassion for her. The day of his visit, everyone who blessed and administered the sacrament was African-American. I'm not sure whether or not this was a deliberate choice, but I felt it was the ward's

statement, and by extension, the Church's, regarding diversity and tolerance. Brother Beck's reaction was not recorded, but I imagine that he focused on the sacrament itself, and not so much on the priesthood holders – like any good Mormon, regardless of political affiliation.

My overall sense is that politics in the ward is somehow subsumed by the great needs of members in a diverse inner-city congregation and by our primary goal to build a strong, cooperative religious community. Our ward membership is not only comprised of politicians but academics, artists, actors, and people who work for the government and non-profits. The ward is also distinguished by a high number of members who live in

subsidized housing and benefit from social programs from the Church or the government. Some of our members lack basic job skills, and speak English as a second language. In order to function as a cohesive religious body, we must all come together and offer our talents and resources to one another for the benefit of the whole community. Failing to contribute or to accept the contributions of others because we don't share the same political point of view is trumped by our commitment to each other and our shared faith. One benefit of a geographically assigned ward structure is that people of many socioeconomic backgrounds are forced to cooperate and support each other in a way that's blind to color, money, or politics—just as the Gospel intends us to live.✠

“In order to function as a cohesive religious body, we must all come together and offer our talents and resources to one another for the benefit of the whole community. Failing to contribute or to accept the contributions of others because we don't share the same political point of view is trumped by our commitment to each other and our shared faith.”



Caroline, John, and Jackie Kennedy in March 1958 • LIFE



George W. Bush and Family



Barack Obama and Family • Election Night, 11/04/08

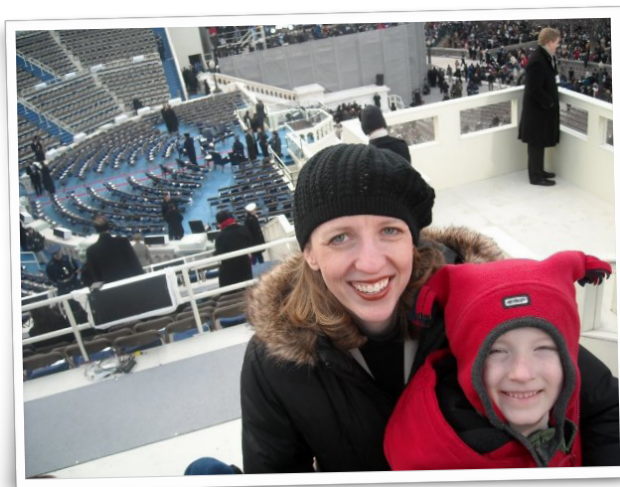
Front Row Politics

People forget politicians are people. They forget that they have lives, have families, and are just women and men who are trying to come up with solutions to the country's problems.

By Heather Bennett Oman • Williamsburg, Virginia

I was 17 the first time I saw my dad's face on a bus. I knew the campaign was kicking into high gear, but nobody had ever actually said, "Hey, Heather, guess what? We're putting your dad on BUSES now." I was driving somewhere in Salt Lake City, and the bus pulled up right next to me, leaving me face to face with my father. He was huge, larger than life, and I had a hard time wrapping my mind around the fact that other people would be meeting him like this, too.

It's not that I minded other people meeting my father. I like my dad. He's a good dad, and a good man. But to see Dad on a bus—well, it made me feel kind of naked. Like that dream when you are at school and you forget your pants and everybody is looking at you. When my father decided to run for the United States Senate, suddenly everybody was looking at us.



Heather Oman and her son on stage before Obama's inauguration

I have often been asked what it was like to grow up with a Senator for a dad. I'm never quite sure how to answer that question. What exactly do they want to know? What am I supposed to say? What kind of life do they think a Senator's family leads? All I can really do is shrug and say, "Pretty normal, I guess."

I suppose there are some things that happened in my family that don't happen in other families. During the 1996 presidential election, for example, I had to say to a friend on the phone, "I've gotta go, Bob Dole is calling." I've had a conversation with Michelle Obama about her arm workouts. But on the whole, I feel like our family is a normal family who does normal things. People are always surprised when they run into my father doing things like grocery shopping. I can't tell you the number of people who say, "I saw your dad in Smith's buying dog food. Just like a regular person!" Other people ask me how my dad gets around town. When I tell him that he drives himself to work in his own car, they are a little disappointed that it's not a more dramatic story. And on 9/11, when the entire family was calling him, frantic to know more information, Dad simply told us that he was learning everything from CNN, same as us.

People forget politicians are people. They forget that they have lives, have families, and are just women and men who are trying to come up with solutions to the country's problems. I'm constantly amazed at the demonization and deification that happens to politicians. I'm not sure why people think that



Mitt Romney and Family



President Bill Clinton and Family • 1993 • by Alfred Eisenstaedt



Richard Nixon and Family

a certain somebody is the devil, or conversely, that the other person is the country's would-be savior (and sometimes I think the deification is a little scarier). They're just people, and don't have nearly the amount of power we think they have.

Also, people forget that they aren't getting the whole story if they are getting it from the media. I'm not talking about specific media outlet biases (although those exist); I'm saying all media has an agenda: to get the story out fast and keep the message simple. Dad used to tell me that the negative impact of a political mistake is directly related to how easily the mistake is understood. For example, remember Whitewater? Yeah, nobody else does, either. It was a complicated real estate scandal surrounding the Clintons that involved loans and the SEC. And while it's possible that the Clintons actually did something illegal, the details don't easily fit into a 30-second sound byte, and so the story didn't have much staying power. They caught some backlash for that, but compare Whitewater to the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Not everybody understands or really cares about complicated real estate transactions. But everybody understands and cares about sex.

People also forget that politicians have to work with other politicians. The year my father was voted out of office, a lot of people were mad about a lot of different things. One constituent said to him, "If you had worked harder, you could have defeated Obamacare!" My father tried to point out that his wasn't the only vote that counted—there are 99 other people in the Senate who have a say in how things go, not to mention the nearly 450 folks in the House. Politics is a team sport, and sometimes, no matter how hard you try, your team loses.

And sometimes, if you want to get anything done, you have to compromise. There's a saying in D.C. that if everybody is mad when the bill passes, it means that the job got done right. But in politics, compromise has become a dirty word. It suggests that people are selling out, laying down their principles, giving in because they don't have the moral strength to stand up for what

they believe. But in everyday life, real people compromise all the time. When I buy a car, I expect the transaction to be one of compromise, where the seller and I can come to an agreement that suits us both. I compromise with my children—if you want to watch this movie until bed, then no TV time in the morning. As a nation, we make deals all the time with our friends, our family, and in business. Why are we so upset when our politicians do it? And we do get upset, because nobody votes for the guy who says, "I'll look at the issues from all angles, see how I can get the best deal in the end that most benefits our state, and then vote accordingly." Nope, we want ideological purists, and are constantly disappointed when ideological solutions don't apply to complex situations.

But for all the media hype about dishonest politicians, and the end of the world as we know it, I still believe in our country, and I have a hard time believing that our public servants want to hurt it. Having a father for a senator means that I've had a front row seat to a lot of political maneuverings. I have met the people the country vilifies up close, and it has taught me that while there is more than enough ego to go around, I don't believe any of them are out to hurt America or the American people. Sure, politicians pander and they flirt with the camera and some of what they say is motivated by gross egomania. But at the end of the day, most of them vote how they vote because they think it's the right thing to do. You may disagree with them, you may think that they are picking the wrong battle or the wrong way to fight it, and in some cases, you may be right. But I have yet to meet a politician who hates America.

My father lost his re-election bid in 2010. That's the way the system works—if you don't like the guy who is in, you vote him out and let somebody else take a turn. His life in politics is over, and that's okay. Our family will continue much as it did before, with perhaps fewer trips to the White House. And with fewer buses with his face on it. For the first time in almost two decades, nobody is looking at us. ❀

SACRAMENT MEETING TALK: *Environmental Stewardship*

My goal is broader: to argue that Mormon women of all political persuasions are needed to speak from a place of faith in setting a new course for American politics in the 21st century. | Given in the San Pedro Ward on September 11, 2011 | By Marina Capella • San Pedro, California

I have been moved to speak on a topic near and dear to my heart, and which I feel is somewhat neglected over our pulpits and in our lesson manuals. The topic is environmental stewardship.

As a pediatrician I have chosen to dedicate myself to the health of children. As such, it is my responsibility to care for children suffering from the effects of pollution and environmental degradation. It is well established that children living in agricultural areas are at high risk of exposure to pesticides, and therefore at higher risk of diseases like asthma. Closer to home, according to the American Lung Association, the city of Los Angeles has the worst air quality of any city in the United States. Although things have improved during the past decade in L.A., based on current levels of pollution, 310,000 children will develop asthma before the age of 10, and over 1 million over their lifetime. Overall in this country, the percentage of children with asthma has doubled over the past two decades.

I not only care about children, but about all living creatures. My husband Christian is a marine biologist. Part of the research for his dissertation involves studying the 19th century otter trade. If you have ever seen a sea otter then you know how intelligent, playful and charismatic these animals are. Some of you may also know that in the 19th century, American fur traders snuck into Spanish California and illegally killed hundreds of thousands of these beautiful creatures (the equivalent of 300 Exxon-Valdez disasters). They only agreed to stop 40 years after the otters were believed to be extinct. This problem extends to practically everything large and awe-inspiring in the ocean: Of the 256 species of ocean fish and mammals that are more than three feet long, their numbers have declined an average of 90 percent

in the last 50 years. At the current rate of fishery collapse, there will be no wild-caught fish in our markets by 2047.

THE SPIRIT AND THE BODY ARE THE SOUL OF MAN

I think most people would agree these are all bad things, but are environmental issues relevant to our salvation? I believe so, and that God has made it clear in the scriptures that we have obligations to be good stewards of our environment.

In Section 59 of the *Doctrine & Covenants*, the Lord teaches us:

Yea, all things which come out of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of [humankind], both to please the eye and to gladden the heart;
Yea, for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul.
And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto us; for unto this end were they made to be used, *with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion* [emphasis added].

In Section 104, this theme is expounded upon:

For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every [person] accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures.
For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

These scriptures exhort us to be responsible stewards of our physical environment. This is not some general duty we have



Melissa Leaym-Fernandez • "Mother & Calf in Tall Grass," "Love, Etcetera," "Mother & Calf in India" • Fort Gratiot, Michigan • www.elephantworkstudio.com

as good citizens, but a *commandment* for us as Christians, a key part of our soul's progress back to heaven. *Just as our adherence to the Word of Wisdom is tied to our spiritual well-being and our worthiness to enter the temple, I believe that our responsible stewardship of this earth has profound implications for our souls.*

Indeed, *all* ordinances are, by definition, physical acts that change our spirits in some way. Why is this? Because "the spirit *and* the body are the soul of man" (D&C 88:15); as Latter-day Saints we believe that there is nothing we do to our bodies that we do not also do to our souls because our bodies *are* our souls. This is true not just of our individual bodies, but of also collectively as a Church. In D&C 103, God explains the conditions under which we can return to the promised land of Zion (Missouri, not Salt Lake). He says, "I have promised [you] the land of Zion. . . . Nevertheless, if [you] pollute [your] inheritances, [you] shall be thrown down; for I will not spare [you] if [you] pollute [your] inheritances" (D&C 103:13-14). And how are we doing as stewards of our inheritances? Well, we haven't been asked to gather at Missouri; draw your own conclusions.

WHAT CHURCH LEADERS HAVE SAID

Many modern-day prophets and Church figures have sought to teach us about environmental stewardship. The Church has a long history of being engaged in particular environmental issues, and many leaders have spoken on the subject. Speaking in 1988, Ezra Taft Benson taught us: "Physical and spiritual laws are interrelated. Pollution of one's environment and moral impurity both rest on a lifestyle which partakes of a philosophy

of 'eat, drink, and be merry'—gouge and grab now, without regard to consequences. Both violate the spirit of stewardship for which we will stand accountable The Church has urged its members to be efficient users of resources, to avoid waste and pollution, and to clean up their own immediate environment or that over which they have control."

Speaking just a few years earlier in 1984, Gordon B. Hinckley warned: "This earth is His creation. When we make it ugly, we offend Him Let us live with the certain knowledge that some day 'we shall be brought to stand before God, knowing even as we know now, and have a bright recollection of all our guilt' (Alma 11:43)."¹ President Hinckley, who frequently encouraged members to live within their means, also liked to remind us of the old pioneer adage, "Fix it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without."²

Many Church leaders have also been staunch advocates of kindness to animals, including domestic animals, wildlife and even insects. In the earlier days of the Church, Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and George Albert Smith (among others) frequently admonished Church members to treat animals with kindness and mercy. Speaking in a General Conference, Wilford Woodruff told the Saints: "My soul has been pained a great deal by the treatment which man extends to the beasts of the field. The Lord has given us horses and cattle and other animals for our benefit. Not one of these animals can talk to us, and I therefore look upon their ill-treatment as a great evil and a sin." Treatment of animals was at one point such a concern that the Church held annual "Humane Days" beginning in the 1890s,

¹ "What Shall I Do Then with Jesus Which Is Called Christ?" Liahona, Apr 1984

² "I Believe", Ensign, Aug 1992

and in the 1950s the *Children's Friend* sponsored a "Kindness to Animals" club. In 1947, Joseph Fielding Smith wrote a lesson for Sunday School classes in which he condemned hunting for sport. David O. McKay argued against wearing fur and feathers, and in the 1951 General Conference said, "A true Latter-day Saint is kind to animals, is kind to every created thing." Heber J. Grant and George Albert Smith took their humane treatment of animals to yet another level—they were virtually vegetarians and encouraged members to heed the Word of Wisdom by eating meat sparingly in General Conferences.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Knowing all these things, how can we become better stewards of our environment starting today? There are countless books, websites, and entire organizations devoted to answering this question. I encourage you to seek out information from any and all of these. Here, I will mention just three basic ideas, in no particular order, for how to be a more responsible steward. I don't think these are necessarily the most important things you can do; they're just three ideas.

1. Consume less: I'm not talking about calories here. I'm talking about anything and everything. Remember what D&C 59 taught us? "[God] hath given all these things unto us; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, *not to excess.*" Picture the average American woman's shoe closet. A survey of American women in 2007 found that women, on average, own 19 pairs of shoes. The survey also found that women, on average, bought four pairs of shoes per year, wear only four pairs of shoes regularly, and have worn one quarter of their shoes only once. Where do these shoes end up when their owner decides to make room for a new pair? A minority end up being recycled or given a second life as part of someone else's shoe closet, but the vast majority end up as non-biodegradable waste in landfills.

Shoes are just one example of a product we could easily do with less of, but there are countless other things that we probably have filling our homes that we could stand to do

**"A true
LATTER-DAY SAINT
is kind to animals,
is kind to every
CREATED THING."**

-DAVID O. MCKAY "

without. The concept also extends to non-material things like energy. We can turn off the lights when we're not using them. We can choose more fuel-efficient cars and even bike and walk places when feasible. We can turn off the faucet while we brush our teeth. We can wash a fork or cup instead of using a disposable one. There are a million little things we can do to cut down on our consumption of material and energy resources.

2. Be a *conscientious* consumer. Once in a while, we all do need a new pair of shoes. When that happens, there are various things we can do to ensure that our purchases are responsible in terms of environmental impact. I've recently adopted a few simple strategies when it comes to buying shoes: I search for well-constructed, comfortable shoes that will last me at least a few years. I buy shoe polish in various colors to try to keep them looking presentable. If the lining gets torn or worn, I try to replace it instead of tossing the entire shoe.

In this regard, I think discount stores and retail sales are a great thing in that they make needed products such as clothing and furniture affordable for everyone. However, it pains me to see cheap items lining store shelves that will inevitably end up filling a landfill within a matter of years, or months, or sometimes even days. It's easy to pick up an item that costs only 99 cents and think, "I don't care too much if this gets dirty, or torn, or broken, because I can throw it away and buy another one." And thus our landfills continue to fill up, and more material resources are used and more energy is used to make the things that will replace the ones we threw away.

I think we can do a better job of thinking through the impact that our choices have on our world. Where does an item come from? Was it made using methods or chemicals that pollute the air, soil, or water, even if that air, soil, or water happen to be in China? Did it have to be shipped all the way from Indonesia to get to me? Does the company I patronize treat and pay its workers fairly? Am I going to use the item long enough to justify the purchase? Where will the item end up after I'm done with it? Is it recyclable?

3. Eat less meat. Yes, as a vegetarian and animal lover, I am undoubtedly biased in this regard. Nevertheless, I do invite you to review and seriously consider what *Doctrine & Covenants* Section 89 has to say on the topic. “Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly. And [this is the part we often ignore] it is pleasing unto me that they should *not* be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine [emphasis added].”

For me, I decided to eat less meat, and eventually abstain from meat entirely, after learning about factory farms, which keep animals in fairly gruesome conditions before the slaughter, but can also exploit their human workers to a shocking degree. Another reason to consider abstaining from meat is how inefficient it is to produce: Every pound of meat requires many pounds of grains and/or vegetables and hundreds of gallons of water to produce. (In fact, it accounts for eight percent of all human water use.) If everyone ate less meat there would be more food for everyone, more wild space, and less environmental pollution in the form of nitrogen runoff.

I mentioned earlier that President Grant was a near-vegetarian. In 1937, at the age of 80, he said this in a General Conference: “I think that [a] reason I have very splendid strength for an old man is that during the years we have had a cafeteria in the Utah Hotel I have not, with the exception of not more than a dozen times, ordered meat of any kind. . . . I have endeavored to live the Word of Wisdom, and that, in my opinion, is one reason for my good health.” President Grant remained strong and active until his death in 1945 at the age of 88.

Even if you decide vegetarianism isn’t for you, you can strive to have the same kind of loving regard for animals and wildlife that our prophets demonstrated and advocated.

CONCLUSION

I want to make it perfectly clear that I do *not* consider myself a paragon of ecological virtue. But, this is what we do in Church: encourage one another to become better. I pray that we will all take seriously the call from scriptures and prophets to be responsible, caring stewards of our earthly environment.✱



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